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Provisional summary record (partial)* of the 39th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 22 July 2008, at 3 p.m.

President: Mr. Hoscheit (Vice-President) ..... (Luxembourg)

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* No summary record was prepared for the rest of the meeting. A panel discussion was conducted.

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In the absence of Mr. Mérorès (Haiti), Mr. Hoscheit (Luxembourg), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Coordination, programme and other questions (*continued*)

(g) Tobacco or health (*continued*) (E/2008/59; E/2008/L.19)

1. **The President**, recalling that the Director of the World Health Organization Tobacco-Free Initiative had introduced the report of the Secretary-General on the Ad Hoc Inter-Agency Task Force on Tobacco Control (E/2008/59) at the 38th meeting, invited the Council to resume its consideration of the agenda item concerned.

2. **Mr. Álvarez** (Uruguay) said that his country's firm commitment to tobacco control initiatives was reflected internationally in its ratification of the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control and nationally in its ban on smoking in enclosed public places, which dated back to 2006. It was the only country in Latin America with such a policy. As smokers not only ran the risk of contracting a variety of diseases, but also endangered the health of others, it was the responsibility of all Member States to keep the workplace and enclosed public spaces free of tobacco smoke and it was the responsibility of the Organization to set an example in the field of public health.

3. Cigarette smoking generated costs in terms of human resources management, causing staff to miss work because of illness and resulting in medical and health-care expenditure, early retirement due to ill health, lower productivity, lost working time due to smoking breaks and higher building costs due to the provision of smoking areas. The capital master plan incorporated calculation of the cost of air conditioning for such areas. The General Assembly should take action to follow up Council resolution 2006/42, and ensure that United Nations premises were smoke free at the earliest possible opportunity.

4. **Mr. Limeres** (Observer for Argentina) said that his delegation supported and promoted the policy of keeping enclosed public spaces and workplaces completely free of tobacco smoke and allowing smoking only in the open air and away from buildings' sources of ventilation. Ratification of the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, which Argentina had signed in 2003, was pending in the Senate. Meanwhile, seven provinces and many municipalities had enacted legislation which would result in the protection of 14 million people from tobacco smoke in public places, and Argentina, which took part as an observer in the Conference of the Parties, was involved in cooperation to promote tobacco control in the Common Market of the South (MERCOSUR) region. It welcomed the draft Council decision on smoke-free United Nations premises, and urged the General Assembly to act on the Council's wish and ensure that the Organization set an example by working towards a smoking ban.

5. **Ms. Isler** (Observer for Switzerland) said that her delegation supported the Council's initiative on smoke-free United Nations premises, recognizing that exposure to second-hand tobacco smoke must be addressed in order to ensure a healthy workplace. It hoped that United Nations Headquarters would follow the example of the smoking policy of the United Nations Office at Geneva and that the Member States would take appropriate action at the sixty-third session of the General Assembly.

6. **Mr. Hirsch** (Observer for Norway) said that his Government fully supported the long-standing tobacco-control efforts of the World Health Organization, and hoped that the General Assembly would take appropriate action at its sixty-third session.

Draft decision entitled "Smoke-free United Nations premises" (E/2008/L.19)

7. **The President** informed the Council that the draft decision had no programme budget implications.

8. **Mr. Adsett** (Canada), speaking also on behalf of Australia and New Zealand, recalled that the Council had drawn the attention of the General Assembly two years previously to the need to take action against exposure to tobacco smoke. A number of Member States had themselves banned smoking in public places, recognizing that there was no safe level of exposure to second-hand smoke. Banning smoking and the sale of tobacco on United Nations premises was not an edict to diplomats to give up cigarettes, but rather an effort to protect health in the workplace. The three delegations hoped that the draft Council decision would find support in the General Assembly.

9. *Draft decision E/2008/L.19 was adopted.*

Oral draft decision entitled "Report of the Secretary-General on the Ad Hoc Inter-Agency Task Force on Tobacco Control"

10. **The President** invited the Council to adopt the following oral draft decision on the Ad Hoc Inter-Agency Task Force on Tobacco Control:

> "The Economic and Social Council *decides* to request the Secretary-General to submit a report on the work of the Ad Hoc Inter-Agency Task Force on Tobacco Control to the Council at its substantive session of 2010."

11. *The oral draft decision entitled "Report of the Secretary-General on the Inter-Agency Task Force on Tobacco Control" was adopted.*

Social and human rights questions

(i) Genetic privacy and non-discrimination (E/2008/51)

12. **Mr. Seth** (Director, Office for ECOSOC Support and Coordination, Department of Economic and Social Affairs), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on genetic privacy and non-discrimination (E/2008/51), said that the issue had been on the Council's agenda on a triennial basis since 2001. The report before the Council presented Member States' and United Nations entities' responses to a note verbale requesting views on the most appropriate forums for the consideration of genetic privacy. While the response rate had once again been low, the wish had emerged that United Nations entities, such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), WHO and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, should remain involved and that the Council should invite the Director-General of UNESCO to consult with other United Nations entities on the implementation of, and follow-up to, Council resolutions 2001/39 and 2004/9 and relevant UNESCO declarations, and to constitute an inter-agency coordination mechanism which should report every three years to the Council, beginning in 2010.

13. **Mr. Falatar** (Observer for the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) said that any scientific revolution brought with it ethical and social questions. There had been broad international debate on reconciling the benefits of progress in genetics with certain core human values. The Universal Declaration on the Human Genome and Human Rights, the International Declaration on Human Genetic Data and the Universal Declaration on Bioethics and Human Rights constituted the only international framework approved and recognized by the Member States. While the instruments in question had been adopted within the framework of UNESCO, and any further international action should be grounded within the ethical principles contained in them, no single forum could address the issue alone: the roles of each organization in the United Nations system remained relevant.

Draft decision entitled "Genetic privacy and non-discrimination" (E/2008/L.20)

14. **The President** informed the Council that the draft decision had no programme budget implications.

15. *Draft decision E/2008/L.20 was adopted.*

United Nations research and training institutes (E/2008/72)

16. **Ms. Thouez** (Observer for the United Nations Institute for Training and Research), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) (E/2008/72), recalled that the General Assembly, in paragraph 9 of its resolution 62/210 on UNITAR, had urged measures to draw more sufficient and predictable support from Member States, in particular for the Institute's core diplomatic training, which was distinct from, and broader than, its training and capacity-building activities in other fields.

17. The report had been prepared in compliance with paragraph 11 of General Assembly resolution 62/210. Henceforth, however, reports of the Secretary-General and the Executive Director of the Institute would be consolidated and submitted to the Council rather than to the General Assembly on the basis of a biennial reporting cycle beginning in 2009 .

18. With a reconstituted Board of Trustees, the Institute had embarked on major strategic reform, including implementation of the remaining Board of Auditors recommendations, dating from 2002 and 2003, to mould it into a centre of excellence in standard-setting, training and training methods and research. While UNITAR was excelling financially and had the second largest budget of all the training and research bodies in the United Nations system, the one

area of its activity that remained unable to operate as financially self-sufficient was its core diplomatic training. Core diplomatic training had historically been funded using voluntary, non-earmarked contributions, but such contributions had been in progressive decline, representing currently only 2.4 per cent of the total UNITAR budget. Yet core diplomatic training, a unique service provided by the Organization for all of its Member States, offered important courses and workshops on the United Nations system and its operation and represented 5 per cent of the total number of individuals trained each year.

19. Regular evaluations of the courses indicated considerable satisfaction on the part of trainees, and demand for them was increasing. While a greater number of Member States were requesting the services of UNITAR to train their officials, fewer of them were contributing the non-earmarked funds that enabled such services to be offered in a multilateral environment. As he had in his 2007 report (A/62/377), the Secretary-General recommended in the report currently before the Council that, as a first priority, the Fifth Committee should reconsider the issue of financing core diplomatic training from the United Nations regular budget, specifically urging that half the cost be so financed . Support from the United Nations regular budget would be a show of solidarity for continuous learning and for reform efforts to make the United Nations a venue for effective and efficient decision-making.

Coordination, programme and other questions (*continued*)

(d) Long-term programme of support for Haiti (E/2008/90; E/2008/L.15)

20. **Mr. Adsett** (Canada), speaking as Chairman of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti, introduced the report of the Advisory Group (E/2008/90), noting that the cancellation of the Group's planned mission to Haiti in May 2008 following the dissolution of that country's Government did not affect the relevance of the Group's recommendations, since the situation in Haiti had not changed much since the previous year. Indeed, most of the challenges described in the previous year's report remained acute and some of the recommendations contained therein had simply been repeated. One notable development since 2007 was the finalization of the national growth and poverty reduction strategy paper. That paper, the key policy document for all stakeholders in Haiti's development, linked all sectors and addressed long-, medium-, short-, and immediate-term needs.

21. Noting that political stability was crucial to development work in Haiti, he expressed the hope that a new Government would be put in place as soon as possible in order to implement the Group's recommendation. Haiti must remain on the international agenda and continue to receive appropriate support. A strong United Nations presence on the ground, including through the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), was essential. Moreover, the events of April 2008 had reinforced the argument that, for progress to be made, all relevant stakeholders must reassess how they conducted business in Haiti.

22. The Group hoped that the Government of Haiti and the international community would consider its recommendations as a useful summary of what needed to be addressed and not as a comprehensive road map. Noting that much could still be done to enhance the understanding of the challenges facing Haiti and the efforts needed to help that country, he hoped that the Council would allow the Group to continue its work for at least another year.

Draft resolution entitled "Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti (E/2008/L.15)

23. **Mr. Arsenault** (Canada), speaking also on behalf of Benin, Brazil, Chile, Haiti, Spain, and Trinidad and Tobago, introduced the draft resolution entitled "Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti" (E/2008/L.15) and expressed the hope that it would be adopted by consensus.

24. **Ms. Bourgiugnon** (France), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that the European Union deplored the loss of life and damage caused by Haiti's food-related riots of April 2008 and reiterated its support for the Haitian President's efforts to achieve political, economic and social stability. As was clear from those riots, MINUSTAH played an essential role in maintaining public security and the rule of law and should therefore remain in place, with no reduction in its strength.

25. The European Union welcomed the improvement in the security situation and the implementation of reforms of the police, justice and border management

sectors. Those reforms, along with an urgently needed reform of the prison system, would help to establish the rule of law in the country.

26. The European Union followed with interest the work being done on a consolidation plan. The plan must include a medium-term strategy for the gradual and successful handing over to Haitians of the functions currently carried out by the international community.

27. The European Union reiterated its long-term standing support for the Haitian people and authorities. It would continue to work closely with other donors and the wider international community to support the Haitian authorities in their efforts to meet the urgent needs of the Haitian people and achieve political and social stability. The European Union was, therefore, in favour of extending the Group's mandate.

(f) Ad hoc advisory groups on African countries emerging from conflict (A/63/83-E/2008/77; E/2008/55)

28. **Mr. Kumalo** (South Africa), speaking in his capacity as Chairman of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Guinea-Bissau, introduced the report of that Group (E/2008/55). After providing an overview of the Group's work since its establishment in 2002, highlighting its main accomplishments, and putting forward some key recommendations, the report recommended the termination of the Group's mandate at the current substantive session of the Council. Since December 2007, Guinea-Bissau had been considered by the Peacebuilding Commission. He hoped that, as a result, Guinea-Bissau would benefit from sustained attention at a higher level. Moreover, the Group's recommendations continued to be relevant and should be considered by the Peacebuilding Commission in the integrated peacebuilding strategy that was currently being designed.

The discussion covered in the summary record ended at 4.10 p.m.

29. *A panel discussion on the topic of "The Economic and Social Council and the Peacebuilding Commission" was conducted. The panel was chaired by Mr. Jean-Marc Hoscheit (Luxembourg), Vice-President of the Council. The Panellists were Ms. Maria Luiza Ribeiro Viotti, Permanent Representative of Brazil to the United Nations, Mr. Dumisani Shadrack Kumalo, Permanent Representative of South Africa to the United Nations; and Mr. Nikhil Seth, Director, Office for Economic and Social Council Support and Coordination, Department of Economic and Social Affairs.*